

Army Civilian Leadership Training — Past, Present and Future

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WITH PUBLICATION of the June 1999 US Army Field Manual (FM) 22-100, *Army Leadership*, the Army moves a step closer to making the Total Army a reality. The name change from *Military Leadership* to *Army Leadership* signals that this latest version is different and more inclusive than its predecessors. Previous editions were narrowly focused on the uniformed portion of the Army at battalion and lower levels and pretty much excluded the rest of the Army, including a segment that today amounts to about 20 percent of the Total Army personnel structure—Department of the Army civilians (DACs). This new FM addresses all Army leaders—military and civilian.

The FM's authors have incorporated references to DACs throughout the new manual, as well as vignettes that address situations which civilian employees are likely to encounter. The scope also extends beyond that of earlier versions and lays out three distinct levels of leadership applicable throughout the Total Army—direct, organizational and strategic.

The term *Total Army* has been widely used for some time now in pronouncements by the Army's senior leaders. References to the Total Army usually extend to include Active Component, Army National Guard, US Army Reserve and DACs. The new FM 22-100 follows that format and acknowledges that the Total Army today is dependent upon its soldiers and more than 232,000 civilian employees. That has not always been true. There were times—not too long ago, in fact—when conditions were different.

The Past

Fifteen years ago, Raymond J. Sumser, then director of Civilian Personnel for the Army, reported that "Too little attention is being given to identifying civilians with potential for advancement or to systematically determine the skills . . . needed to prepare such high caliber individuals for progressively more responsible positions. . . . The Army is not

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guiding the . . . development of its future civilian managers in ways which assure most effective and efficient accomplishment of the Army goals."¹

Sumser's statements were echoed in early 1986 when the Department of the Army Inspector General issued findings in a similar vein: "Army leaders are failing to provide effective leadership to the . . . Army civilians. . . . Their concern is primarily for the soldier, not the civilian member of the Army Team. . . . Commanders don't understand the civilian personnel system; most would prefer not to deal with it; and . . . they often aren't willing to learn."²

Similar concerns about deploying civilians to the war zone during Operation *Desert Storm* were reported in *The Whirlwind War: The United States Army in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm*. Deployment of civilians to Southwest Asia may have resulted more from the conditions facing the Army at the time than from any planning beforehand. "The Army as a whole had done little planning for the use of . . . civilians in a war zone. It soon discovered, however, that civilians were needed to fill a number of skilled positions, such as air traffic safety controllers, port safety officers, logistics management specialists, automation and computer specialists, engineers, equipment repair technicians and communications specialists. Most civilians in Southwest Asia worked at modifying and maintaining equipment. . . . At peak deployment in February [1991] 1,500 civilians were in the-

ater. . . . [A] great deal of time, confusion and aggravation could have been avoided had the deployments been better planned. . . . [S]ome analysts thought that future deployments would work better if the use of civilians . . . was incorporated into Army plans."³

More recently, then Secretary of the Army Togo D. West Jr. noted that the Army was becoming a smaller force and increasingly dependent on technology. He concluded that in such an environment, "Army civilians . . . will become even more important to [the Army's] readiness and success. Dedicated civilians support America's Army superbly—at home, with overseas forces and in contingency operations. Army civilians possess skills critical to the Army's success, make vital contributions to the nation's defense every day, and are irreplaceable players on the Army Team."⁴

In his remarks at the beginning of an Army War College class in 1995, Army Chief of Staff General Dennis J. Reimer observed that "We tend to take for granted the great civilians that we have in the United States Army. . . . Those of us in the green suits are often uncomfortable dealing with civilians, but we need to become more comfortable. . . . I would encourage you to get to know the civilians because they bring an awful lot to the table. We just flat can't do it without them."⁵

The Present

The observations illustrated above show how far the Army has come in the past 15 years concerning civilians in the Total Army. The new FM 22-100 is the latest indicator that the Total Army must depend on all its components in performing today's missions.

The Army is smaller today than at any time since before World War II and it continues to downsize. In less than a decade, the Army reduced its ranks by more than 630,000 people, closed more than 700 installations and changed from a forward-deployed force to a Continental United States-based, power-projection force. The number of deployments in that same period increased by 300 percent. Accordingly, missions were realigned and force structures changed.⁶

The bottom line is that DACs have assumed responsibilities in the Total Army that were not even envisioned a couple of decades ago. The Army simply cannot mobilize, deploy or sustain itself without its civilian component. The old ways of doing business do not work anymore. The outdated paradigms that endure about DACs should be revisited. DACs' roles, responsibilities and leader challenges are in constant flux.

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It was only a little more than a decade ago that the Army began providing progressive and sequential competency-based leadership training for civilians through the Center for Army Leadership (CAL), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Army Management Staff College, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Before the mid-1980s, a career track comparable to those for officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) did not exist for DACs. Historically, the career program functional chiefs for about 25 percent of DACs who were in career programs determined their technical requirements. Supervisors determined the appropriate training for those not in career programs. Not enough attention was given to identifying civilians with potential for advancement or systematically determining the skills needed to prepare high-caliber individuals for progressively more responsible leadership roles. In essence, leader development for DACs was not a consideration.

The difficulty of creating a civilian training program was compounded by the fact that civilians enter the federal work force at various levels based on their qualifications for specific jobs, rather than at a single point as officers and enlisted personnel do at the start of their careers. An individual is hired with a presumption of having the training needed for the position he is to occupy. Additional training is provided only after finding that the person needs to enhance the skills required by the job. Bringing such a person to a high-performing level in a reasonable amount of time is a tremendous challenge for any commander or leader. Historically civilian training does not compete with military

Leadership Competency Percent Gain Scores

Six-Month OLE Follow-Up Survey of Participants and Their Supervisors

	Participants	Supervisors
Communication	15.50	8.00
Professional Ethics	9.50	5.00
Teaching/Counseling	6.25	8.00
Decision Making	4.50	5.50
Planning	13.75	7.50
Supervising	10.00	6.25
Team Building	5.25	7.25
Technical Proficiency	6.50	4.75
Use of Available Systems	17.25	8.25

training for resources.

The Army has made considerable progress in the past 15 years in modernizing civilian personnel management. Programs such as the Army Civilian Training, Education and Development System (ACTEDS) and the Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES) have eliminated many of the earlier system's complexities, resulting in some civilian developmental programs more closely resembling those for officers and enlisted personnel.

ACTEDS provides a career progression road map for developing and training civilians from entry to senior level. The development of civilian leaders, like that of their uniformed colleagues, is a blend of institutional training, operational assignments and self-development. The *Civilian Leader Development Action Plan* provides similar frames of reference as plans developed for officers, warrant officers and NCOs. ACTEDS specifies training in two areas: professional technical career training and leadership training.

Leadership Training

CAL's Civilian Leadership Training Division (CLTD) at the US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) was established in 1985 to provide leadership development for DACs. Three courses were developed for intern to manager levels:

- *Intern Leadership Development Course (ILDC)*. Begun in 1986, ILDC's target audience is new Army interns. The course objective is to ensure that interns are knowledgeable about the structure of the US Army, leadership styles, team building and group dynamics, leadership competencies and their own emerging roles as tomorrow's leaders. Through Fiscal Year 1998 (FY 98), 11,690 interns had completed the course.

- *Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) Course*. Started in 1988, LEAD's focus is the first-time, first-line supervisor. The LEAD course is designed to teach leaders how to assess their own effectiveness, assess employee and team

effectiveness, motivate and influence employees, communicate effectively, conduct counseling, resolve conflicts, develop strategies to create fully functioning teams, make effective decisions and explain the effect of values on individual and team effectiveness. LEAD is conducted at home station by local command facilitators, who successfully completed the LEAD train-the-trainer course conducted by CLTD. By the end of FY 98, 38,802 supervisors had completed LEAD, while 1,260 facilitators had completed the train-the-trainer course.

- *Organizational Leadership for Executives (OLE)*. Established in 1986, OLE provides leadership training to "supervisors of supervisors" and managers of programs, resources and policy. The OLE provides leaders with skills necessary to conduct organizational assessments, communicate influentially, establish an effective organizational climate, manage organizational change, develop organizational strategic plans, diagnose their own personal effectiveness and build high-performing teams. More than 6,900 supervisors have graduated from OLE. Gains shown on six-month follow-up surveys of OLE participants and their supervisors are depicted in the figure. These three courses have been conducted long enough now that a significant number of interns who completed ILDC in its early days are attending OLE, have progressed in their careers and are now "supervisors of supervisors." The impact to the Army of more than 58,000 graduates as we move into the 21st century should be significant.

There are some underlying concepts that are common to all three courses. The content in each course is embedded in the Army's leadership doctrine and values. Participants experience leadership in its purest form—*experience* being the operative word. Experiential learning permeates the course from the moment class begins and continues until the participants depart. CLTD courses are the only ones the Army offers that employ experiential learning. Adults learn better if they experience a situation rather than simply hearing about it from others. In experiential learning, everyone in a situation has his own personal experience. Human nature being what it is, no two experiences are exactly the same because of individual backgrounds, prior experiences, biases, values, beliefs and attitudes. Once the common experience is complete, participants examine the varied perspectives in the group and look at why those different views exist. Through discussion, participants begin to discover the factors that came together to create the behaviors others saw. They consider the lessons they can take away from the experience and then examine possible new courses



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of action. Through this process, greater and deeper understanding develops, trust grows and teams build.

The focus is on *how* people work together, as contrasted to *what* they may be working on. Participants examine how the group made decisions and how those decisions affected members’ commitment to the final product, how conflicts were resolved, how people communicated with one another and how groups dealt with common issues or problems. In doing this, the participants learn more about themselves and others.

Many opportunities arise throughout each course for participants to discover how influential they can be with other members. They live the Army’s values and come away with a real understanding of

those values—not merely slogans that are little more than “bumper stickers.” They polish influential communication skills and gain a better understanding of their individual strengths and the areas where they may want to change. Opportunities abound for those who desire to practice new behaviors and receive feedback from others in the group. They also examine the choices they have in their lives, which often yields surprises. If individuals see that they are empowered to influence their own behavior, then they can do a better job of influencing and motivating others. Leaders also learn how to diagnose the culture in their organizations, develop visions for their organizations and lead change. Class participants learn what works for them personally and do not simply take home cookie-cutter recipes for leadership.

CLTD continues to enhance its state-of-the-art leadership training by adjusting the courses based on front-end analysis of current needs and follow-up surveys completed by graduates and their supervisors. Interested individuals may obtain additional information and class schedules from the CAL web page at <<http://www.cgsc.army.mil/cal/cltd/cltdfr.htm>>.

The Future

In FY 2000, CLTD will change its name to the Leadership Services Office (LSO) to more accurately reflect its current role in leader development. In addition to providing the training described here, CLTD/LSO—to the extent that manpower and time allow—performs organizational development services for units, organizations and agencies that request them and pay the associated travel and per diem costs. Assistance has been provided to the US Army Training and Doctrine Command deputy chief of staff for Base Operations Support; Office of the Dean, US Army War College; 30th Signal Battalion/Department of Information Management, Hawaii; deputy commandant, CGSC; commandant, US Disciplinary Barracks; and, most recently, a major intervention with the Civilian Human Resource Management Agency, Headquarters, US Army Europe.

The services focused on:

- Organizational assessment.
- Increasing awareness of behaviors that help or hinder personal and organizational effectiveness.
- Integrating personal and organizational goals.
- Helping the organization make better use of its human potential.
- Increasing member participation in decision making.
- Increasing trust in the organization.
- Effecting an organizational culture change to more effective ways of doing business.
- Creating organizational vision and the resulting strategic plan to realize that vision.

CLTD/LSO is most recognized for its mission—providing DAC leadership training. The rapidly changing organizational landscape dictates that progressive and future-oriented organizations keep a constant vigil on direction and the indicators of future trends. CLTD/LSO has done that in the past and will continue to do so.

A recent US Army General Counsel opinion states that CLTD/LSO training may be offered to any government agency—local, state or federal—on a cost-reimbursable basis, thereby expanding CLTD/LSO's sphere of influence immeasurably. That opinion has created a potential training popu-

lation of every government worker in the United States. This opportunity presents CLTD/LSO a tremendous responsibility to continue offering the same quality cutting-edge leadership services it has delivered since the organization's creation. Plans are to pilot cost-reimbursable training by offering vacant seats to other organizations on a test basis in FY 2000.

The *Government Performance Management Review Act* also stated that organizations would create strategic plans. CLTD/LSO has the ability to guide organizations through this process. Many have used this service in the past as a foundation for Army of Excellence and Malcolm Baldrige Award nominations.

The driving force behind CLTD/LSO's success is its members and the core ideology they embrace. CLTD/LSO is about providing quality leadership services—training and organizational assistance—to improve the leadership of America. It is much more than a program or a qualifying adjective in front of the word *leadership*. It is an organization of people dedicated to providing the best possible leadership training and services. Such a challenge necessitates a strategic plan that describes the future for CLTD/LSO and outlines what is needed today to achieve that future. CLTD/LSO has developed a strategic plan that takes the organization to the "next level" and thereby meeting the challenges of an ever-changing environment. **MR**

NOTES

1. Raymond J. Sumser, "They Also Serve, Whose Calling Is Army Civilian," *Army*, October 1984, 169.
2. Department of the Army Inspector General's (DAIG) Office, *Report on Special Inspection of the Army Civilian Personnel Management System* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office [GPO], 5 February 1986), ii.
3. Frank N. Schubert and Theresa L. Kraus, ed., *The Whirlwind War: The United States Army in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm* (Washington, DC: Center for Military History, 1995), 222-23.
4. Togo D. West Jr., *Annual Report to the President and Congress, Report of the Secretary of the Army* (Washington, DC: GPO, February 1995), 281.
5. GEN Dennis J. Reimer, speech (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 14 August 1995).
6. Robert M. Walker and GEN Dennis J. Reimer, *A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army, Fiscal Year 1999* (Washington, DC: GPO, February 1998), vii.
7. Reimer, "Civilian Personnel Development," Memorandum, 10 May 1986.

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